

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 0368

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: SOARES COMMENTS ON CURRENT PORTUGUESE SITUATION

REF: LISBON 0367 (DTG 171125Z JAN 76)

1. BESIDES COMMENTING ON SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST RELATIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE DURING OUR CONVERSATION JANUARY 16 (REFTEL), SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER SOARES PROVIDED FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS:

2. AFM-PARTIES PACT: THE COUNTER-PROPOSAL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL FOR REVISING LAST YEAR'S POLITICAL COMPACT BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES WAS UNACCEPTABLE
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BECAUSE IT LEFT THE MILITARY IN A HEGEMONIAL POSITION. HE

CRITICIZED MELO ANTUNES AND SAID THAT HE HAD IT ON EXCELLENT AUTHORITY THAT MELO ANTUNES HAD NOT CLEARED THE COUNTER-PROPOSAL WITH THE COUNCIL, INCLUDING COSTA GOMES AND EANES. HE WONDERED IF COSTA GOMES AND EANES WERE LETTING MELO ANTUNES "HANG HIMSELF." IN ANY CASE, THE SOCIALISTS WOULD FIGHT THE ANTUNES PROPOSAL.

3. CUNHAL AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY: SOARES DREW OUR ATTENTION TO CUNHAL'S SPEECH OF JAN 15 (LISBON 361). HE NOTED THAT CUNHAL AND THE PCP WERE VERY MUCH ON THE DEFENSIVE AND SAID THAT CUNHAL WAS VERY FEARFUL ("CHEIO DE MEDO"). SOARES SAID THAT BOTH THE PCP AND, EVEN MORE NOTICEABLY, THE SOVIET AND OTHER BLOC EMBASSIES WERE NOW COURTING THE SOCIALIST PARTY. SOARES DERIDED THIS TACTIC SCORNFULLY, ADDING: "THEY ALWAYS DO IT WHEN THEY'RE WEAK."

4. COSTA GOMES: SURPRISINGLY, SOARES THIS TIME DID NOT CRITICIZE PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES. AS ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE, THE SOCIALISTS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY DOWN ON COSTA GOMES SINCE HE PERSONALLY INTERVENED SEVERAL TIMES TO SAVE FORMER PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES DURING SUMMER CRISIS OF 1975. SOARES DID NOT SAY WHAT OR WHY HE HAD CHANGED HIS ATTITUDE, BUT THE RESPECT WITH WHICH HE REFERRED TO THE PRESIDENT WAS EVIDENT THROUGHOUT OUR CONVERSATION. A COUNTER-POISE TO THIS, WAS SOARES'S NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD MELO ANTUNES, WHOM HE BLAMED, NOT ONLY FOR THE MILITARISTIC CAST OF THE PACT PROPOSAL, BUT ALSO FOR THE EFFORT TO HAVE THE GOP RECOGNIZE THE MPLA AND FOR PORTUGAL'S VOTE CONDEMNING "ZIONISM." ON THE LATTER ISSUE, HE SAID HE HAD INFORMATION THAT MELO ANTUNES HAD ACTED ENTIRELY ON HIS OWN WITHOUT CONSULTING THE PM OR THE PRESIDENT.
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